



What does the Department of Managed Health Care do?

The Department of Managed Health Care protects HMO patients by aggressively enforcing California's patients' rights laws, which are the most comprehensive in the nation. We have issued millions of dollars in fines and penalties against HMOs that violate the law. We also work to make the system healthier and more stable.

What does the California HMO Help Center do?

The Department of Managed Health Care's HMO Help Center assists California consumers with health care problems, provides referrals to community and other government organizations, and answers consumers' questions.

*The HMO Help Center
"has proven effective in resolving
consumer questions and complaints."*

The San Francisco Chronicle, 1-28-2001

If you have a problem that you haven't been able to work out with your HMO, call the HMO Help Center.

Our experienced and caring staff of patients' rights experts and medical professionals will help you. We understand how hard it can be to have health care problems at a time when illness itself is an overwhelming burden. Call us. We're here to help.



California HMO Help Center

Mailing address:
980 Ninth Street, Suite 500
Sacramento, CA 95814

Toll Free
1-888-HMO-2219

TDD
1-877-688-9891

Fax
916-255-5241

www.hmohelp.ca.gov



State of California
Arnold Schwarzenegger
Governor

The HMO Help Center *Ready to resolve your HMO problem*



CALIFORNIA HMO HELP CENTER



How can the HMO Help Center help me?

The HMO Help Center works with you to help navigate the often-complicated HMO system and determines the best way to resolve your HMO problem. If we can't resolve your problem, we provide referrals to community and other government health care organizations.

The HMO Help Center is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and available to Californians who speak any of more than 100 different languages.

We're staffed by nearly 100 trained medical professionals, patients' rights experts and customer service representatives.

How does the HMO Help Center resolve HMO problems?

The HMO Help Center is committed to resolving your complaint quickly, but the more complicated problems are resolved through (1) a Formal Complaint or (2) Independent Medical Review, which is described in a separate brochure.

Formal Complaints can resolve the following types of problems:

- + Difficulty getting care
- + Disagreements over whether treatment is covered as a benefit
- + Denials or delays of payment
- + Complaints about poor service by your HMO, PPO or a doctor or other provider
- + Problems regarding termination of coverage or disenrollment from an HMO
- + Problems receiving care due to termination of your physician or medical group

Before you file a complaint with the HMO Help Center, you should first file a complaint with your HMO or the medical group your HMO contracts with to provide you care. Contact your HMO to get information regarding its complaint process. You can find out how to contact your HMO on our website at www.hmohelp.ca.gov.

If you can't resolve a problem with your HMO to your satisfaction within 30 days, you can file a complaint with the HMO Help Center.

After the HMO Help Center receives a complaint, we review all written information provided by you and your HMO, including relevant medical records. The HMO Help Center will try to resolve your complaint within 30 days.

There is no fee for services provided by the HMO Help Center, including Independent Medical Reviews.

How do I file a complaint with the HMO Help Center?

First, complete the complaint form, which is available on the Department's web site or by calling the HMO Help Center at 1-888-HMO-2219. Be sure to sign the form and the Authorization for Release of Medical Records. You may want to include copies of any letters, articles or other documents that support your complaint.

Then, fax the complaint form and copies of your documents to the HMO Help Center at 916-255-5241 or mail them to the address shown on the complaint form.

If the complaint is resolved in your favor, the HMO will be ordered to provide the required services, pay for services, or take other necessary action.

If the complaint is not resolved in your favor, you may still have other options. The HMO Help Center may be able to refer you to a consumer advocate near you. You also have the right to speak to an attorney at any time. The HMO Help Center complaint process does not take the place of a civil legal action. The Department cannot give legal advice or act as your attorney.

